Theft From Vehicles

Many residents and visitors to Montgomery County are victims of the growing problem of theft of property from vehicles and the theft of parts from vehicles (tires, mirrors, etc.).

The vast majority of these thefts are preventable. Here are some recommendations to reduce the chance that the thief will choose your car, truck, van, etc.

1. **Lock your doors and close the windows completely.**

   An open door or window is an invitation to take any property in your vehicle.

2. **Remove valuables from vehicle or lock them in the trunk where they are out of sight.**

   Leaving valuables in view fro m the outside is just the opportunity a thief is looking for.

3. **Do not leave electronic devices or accessories visible.**

   Remove portable electronic devices such as smart phones and GPS navigation systems, including suction cup or bean bag type mounts. (Even the visible appearance of a suction cup ring on the glass windshield can be an enticement to a thief to break in and look for the GPS system.) Do not leave cellphone car charger plugged in because it may lead a thief to think that valuables are in the vehicle.

4. **Report any suspicious persons to the Police.**

   If you observe activity which may be criminal in nature, immediately report it to the Police.

5. **Do not leave money in your vehicle.**

   A thief will break into your vehicle even for a small amount of change.

6. **Park in your garage (if you have one.)**

   If you have a garage at your house - use it. If a thief cannot get to your car he cannot break into it. (We also have many cases, where a thief removes a garage door opener from an unlocked vehicle and then enters the home.)

7. **Do not hide a key on your vehicle.**

   A potential thief could see you hide the key, and then use your key to gain entry into your vehicle.

8. **Record serial numbers of any equipment you install or carry in your vehicle.**

   This will assist the Police in investigating the theft and will help in recovering your property. (Note: The Operation Identification Program, which includes engraving all theft prone items with your driver's license number is also suggested.)

9. **Carry the registration and insurance card with you.**

   Don't leave personal identification documents or credit cards in your vehicle.

10. **Do not leave key fob in your vehicle.**

    Your vehicle will not lock for a period of time with the key fob in vehicle, some vehicles may not lock at all.

Items Frequently Stolen From Vehicles

- Cellular Phones
- Money
- Briefcases
- Clothing
- Purses/Wallets
- CD Players, CDs
- GPS
- Laptop Computers
- Sporting Equipment

Information Requested When Reporting a Suspicious Situation

Description of Person(s)

✓ Age
✓ Race
✓ Sex
✓ Height and Weight
✓ Clothing
✓ Other distinguishing characteristics (facial hair, tattoos, glasses, etc.)

Description of Vehicle

✓ License number
✓ Make and Model
✓ Color
✓ Other distinguishing characteristics (damage, dirty, etc.)
✓ Direction of travel

What Occurred

✓ Provide as detailed account as possible of the incident

Where Did Incident Occur

✓ Provide specific street numbers when possible or where you will meet an officer in a parking lot, etc.

Steps To Take If Your Vehicle Has Been Broken Into

1. Try not to touch the vehicle. (fingerprints may have been left by the perpetrator.)
2. Try to recall all items which were stolen.
3. Call the Montgomery County Department of Police at 301-279-8000. (Note: The report may be taken over the phone, but it is always important to report the crime.)
4. If a Police Officer will be dispatched to your location, please wait for his or her arrival.

Important Numbers

District Community Service Officers

1st District	240-773-6070
2nd District	240-773-6700
3rd District	240-773-6800
4th District	240-773-5500
5th District	240-773-6200
6th District	240-773-5700
Central Auto Theft	240-773-6370
Police Emergency	911
Non-Emergency	301-279-8000

Montgomery County, Maryland
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

Prevent Theft From — Vehicles —

"If They Can SEE IT, They Can STEAL IT!"

SECURE IT!